

Message Text

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TO AMEMBASSY VIENNA PRIORITY

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TAGS: US, PINT, PARM, XG

SUBJECT: AMERICAN PRESS COVERAGE

VIENNA AND GENEVA FOR MBFR AND CSCE

INFO FOR PAOS

1. HIGHLIGHTS. THIS WEEK'S FOREIGN POLICY HEADLINES WERE
MOSTLY ON MIDEAST AND ENERGY PROBLEMS. THURSDAY WASHPOST
FRONTPAGED US STUDIES LITTLE NUCLEAR WARHEAD. SOME FRIDAY
PAPERS FRONTPAGE SCHLESINGER TELLS NEWS CONFERENCE HE DOUBTS
SPY RING BUT PENTAGON MAY HAVE ERRED IN NOT INVESTIGATING
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SOURCE OF PAPERS. NO ITEMS SPECIFICALLY ON MBFR OR CSCE

NOTED THIS WEEK. SOME RECENT COMMENT ON SALT.

2. MINIATURE NUKES. THURSDAY WASHPOST GETLER REPORTED PENTAGON IS MOVING TOWARD DEVELOPMENT OF A MINIATURE NUCLEAR WARHEAD FOR US PERSHING MISSILES BASED IN EUROPE THAT WOULD SHARPLY REDUCE THE AMOUNT OF ATOMIC EXPLOSIVE NOW CARRIED IN THOSE MISSILES, GETLER ADDING PERSHING MISSILES ARE NOW ARMED WITH WARHEADS RANGING FROM 60 KILOTONS TO 400 KILOTONS, AS COMPARED WITH 20-KILOTON BOMB WHICH DESTROYED HIROSHIMA. NEW PERSHING II WARHEAD WOULD BE CUT TO ONE KILOTON AND ADD AN EXTREMELY ACCURATE NEW GUIDANCE SYSTEM WHICH THE MILITARY HOPES WOULD REDUCE DANGER TO SURROUNDING AREAS, ACCORDING GETLER WHO ADDED PENTAGON

RATIONALE IS TWOFOLD: 1, SMALLER NUKES COULD CARRY TO SOVIET UNION FIRST SIGNAL OF ESCALATION OF AN ALREADY STARTED WAR IN EUROPE WITHOUT CREATING NUCLEAR HAVOC IN EUROPE; 2, SMALLER WEAPONS WOULD STILL BE EFFECTIVE AGAINST MILITARY TARGETS AND HOLD OUT POSSIBILITY OF LESS DAMAGE TO CIVILIAN AREAS. ACCORDING GETLER, SUBJECT OF POTENTIAL CHANGES IN TACTICAL NUCLEAR WEAPONS STORED IN EUROPE IS EXTREMELY SENSITIVE AND CONTROVERSIAL IN CONGRESS, AMONG NATO ALLIES, AND EVEN WITHIN PENTAGON, GETLER ADDING CONGRESS LAST SUMMER KILLED MOVE OF SIMILAR SORT RELATING TO ATOMIC ARTILLERY SHELLS, EXPRESSING CONSIDERABLE SKEPTICISM ABOUT WHETHER MODIFIED WEAPONS WERE WORTH THEIR BILLION-DOLLAR COST AND WOULD MAKE MUCH DIFFERENCE OVER CURRENT SHELLS. GETLER SAYS SOME EUROPEANS BELIEVE AMERICAN MOVES FOR SMALLER NUKES REFLECT A REDUCED AMERICAN NUCLEAR COMMITMENT TO DEFEND EUROPE, OTHERS ARGUE THAT MAKING NUCLEAR WAR SEEM ANYTHING BUT CATASTROPHIC WEAKENS DETERRENCE BY PROMOTING THE VIEW THAT SOMEHOW SUCH A WAR COULD BE FOUGHT AND CONTAINED.

3. SALT COMMENT. RECENT WEEKS HAVE WITNESSED A SCATTERING OF COMMENT ON SALT DEADLOCK, INCLUDING A FEW SPECIFICALLY MENTIONING RECENT ANNOUNCEMENT OF RE-TARGETTING OF US MISSILES, ON WHICH SUBJECT NYTIMES SAYS THERE SHOULD BE GREAT NATIONAL DEBATE. HEARST PAPERS STRESS GROWING UNCLASSIFIED

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SOVIET MILITARY SUPERIORITY AND WARN AGAINST OUR BEING DUPED INTO SOME KIND OF SALT ONE REPETITION. SAN DIEGO UNION AND ST. LOUIS GLOBE-DEMOCRAT ARE GENERALLY SIMILAR AND FAVOR ADEQUATE MILITARY APPROPRIATIONS. CHRISTIAN SCIENCE MONITOR CONCLUDES IT'S PROBABLY PRUDENT TO RETAIN ESSENTIAL EQUIVALENCE, ADDING MONITOR RECOGNIZES THAT AMERICAN NUMERICAL OR TONNAGE INFERIORITY COULD HAVE A DAMAGING EFFECT IN POWER POLITICS, UNDERMINING THE

CONFIDENCE OF OUR ALLIES IN THE VALUE OF THE AMERICAN UMBRELLA. TUESDAY JOSEPH KRAFT COLUMN MAINTAINED THERE IS POWERFUL CASE FOR A BIG INCREASE IN DEFENSE SPENDING, GIVEN THE WAY THE RUSSIANS BEHAVE AND THE RUN-DOWN IN AMERICAN MILITARY STOCKS OVER THE PAST FEW YEARS.

3A. TWO PAPERS DEPLORE CURRENT ARMS RACE WITHOUT TAKING CLEAR POSITION ON CURRENT NUCLEAR STRATEGY DEBATE, BUT URGING ACTION AT SALT. COLUMN BY CHARLES YOST IS SIMILAR, CASTING DOUBT ON RECENT EXCITEMENT ABOUT SOVIET SUPERIORITY AND ADDING THERE IS NO REASON WHATEVER TO HAVE SO LOW AN OPINION OF OURSELVES AS TO THINK WE SHOULD SUCCUMB TO SOVIET PRESSURE IF THEY SHOULD BECOME STRONGER THAN WE ARE IN SOME CATEGORIES OF WEAPONS.

3B. NYTIMES PLACES GREATEST STRESS ON DANGERS OF RE-TARGETING US MISSILES TO STRIKE SOVIET MISSILES, WITH POSSIBILITY OF RUSSIAN FEARS THAT US IS PLANNING FIRST-STRIKE CAPACITY AND THUS MAKING BOTH SIDES TRIGGER-HAPPY. TIMES ADVOCATES LIMITING MIRVS AT SALT TWO; INCLUDING APPROPRIATE CORRESPONDING CONCESSIONS BY US. NEW ORLEANS TIMES-PICAYUNE ADMITS THAT NEW RE-TARGETING MINI-DETERRENT IDEA IS AT LEAST EMOTIONALLY MORE ATTRACTIVE THAN MASSIVE RETALIATION BUT UNFORTUNATELY ITS CALL FOR MORE AND BETTER WEAPONS IS RUNNING TOWARD THE ACCELERATED ARMS RACE SALT WAS ESTABLISHED TO HALT. MARQUIS CHILDS COLUMN, NOTED THIS WEEK IN WASHPOST AND BALTSUN, MAINTAINS RE-TARGETING DECISION MEANS SHIFT FROM MUTUAL DETERRENCE TO A COUNTERFORCE, AND SOVIET UNION WOULD HAVE REASON TO BELIEVE THE COUNTERFORCE COMING INTO BEING MIGHT WELL BE A FIRST-STRIKE CAPABILITY, WITH CONSEQUENCES
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